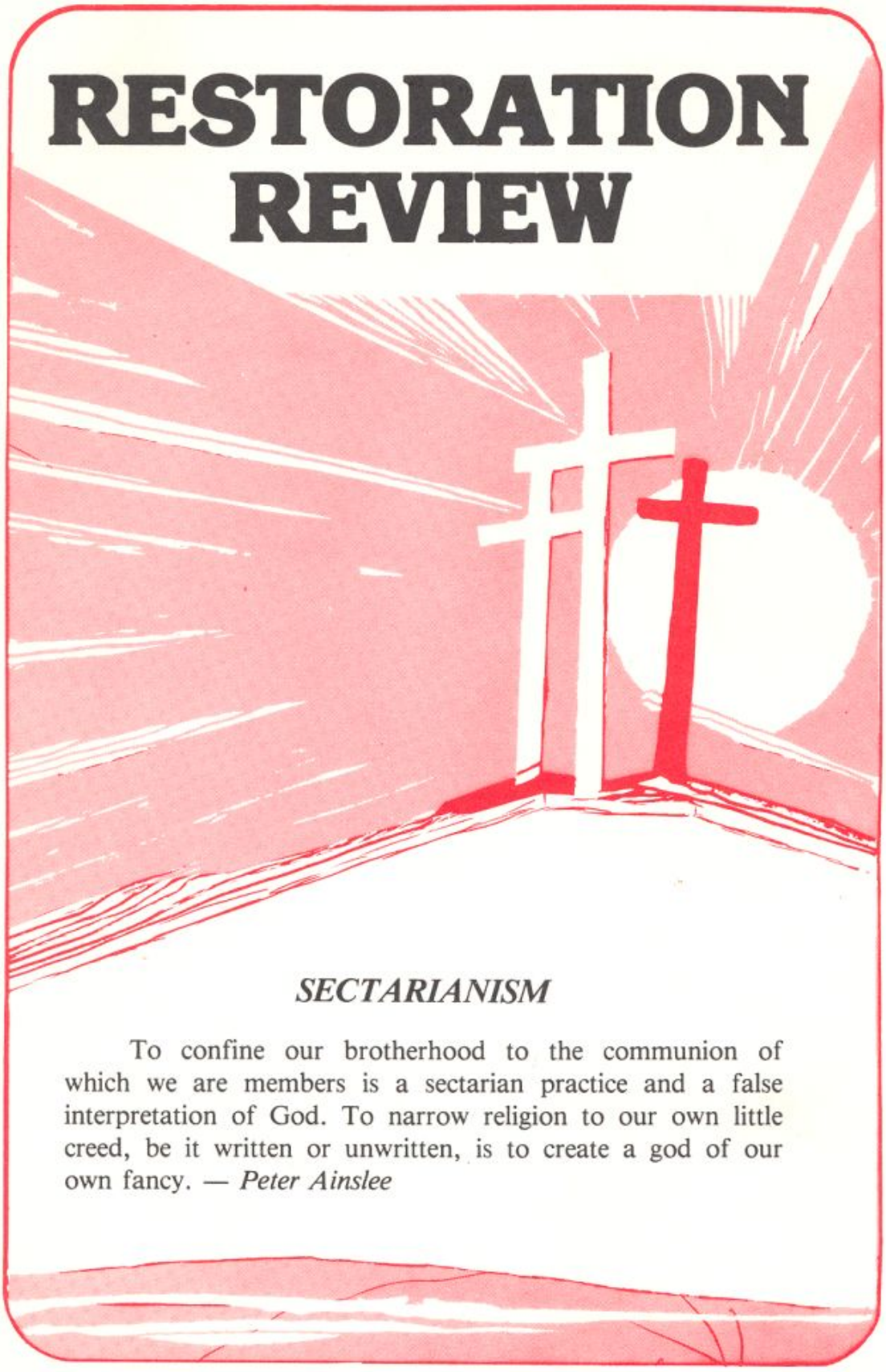
RESTORATION REVIEW



SECTARIANISM

To confine our brotherhood to the communion of which we are members is a sectarian practice and a false interpretation of God. To narrow religion to our own little creed, be it written or unwritten, is to create a god of our own fancy. — *Peter Ainslee*

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With All Your Mind . . .

THE FALLACY OF HUMPTY DUMPTYISM

Alfred North Whitehead, the renowned Harvard philosopher, liked to tell about one of his hunting trips. Being the cook for the band of profs, he stayed behind to prepare victuals while his colleagues went into the woods in quest of squirrel. One of the hunters saw a squirrel on the opposite side of a tree from him. He gradually circled the tree in hopes of getting a shot, but as he moved the squirrel also moved, always keeping his tummy toward the hunter, until at last both man and animal were in their original position.

As professors will, they got into an argument as to whether the man went around the squirrel. They were agreed that he went around the tree, but some insisted that he did *not* go around the squirrel. Others laughed at this nonsense, urging that if he went around the tree he had to go around the squirrel since the squirrel was on the tree. But they decided that *the* professor, Dr. Whitehead, should resolve their dispute, being a noted philosopher.

Dr. Whitehead, who by the way never had a course in philosophy but came to that discipline through medicine, told his colleagues that their dispute was over *words,* that it all depended on what they meant by "go around. " Some were making those words mean one thing, the others something else. An English prof accused Whitehead of nit-picking, for they meant plain old English *go around.* Whitehead reminded them that "plain old English" is not always so plain. "If you mean by *go around,"* he continued, "that the man was at first south of the squirrel, then east of it, then north of it, then west of it, and finally south of it again, then *yes* he went around the squirrel."

"But if you mean the man was first in front of the squirrel, then at its left side, then behind it, then at its right side, and finally in front of it again, then *no* he did not go around the squirrel," he assured them.

The story has it that while some of them grumbled over the decision, they were generally agreed that the old philosopher had something.

This concern for the meaning of words goes back to ancient Greece, back to "the father of philosophy," old Socrates himself, who insisted that there is no way for people to understand each other unless there is agreement on the meaning of the words they use. You would delight in reading Plato's *Euthyphro,* which tells how Socrates encountered a young lawyer by that name who was on his way to court to sue his own father. When Socrates learned that the charge was *impiety,* he was pleased since he had long wanted to know what that meant. As the dialogue unwinds, Socrates is pressing Euthyphro for a definition,

who is hard put to come up with one. He first argued that impiety is that which displeases the gods, but Socrates reminded him that what displeases some gods pleases others, and so *impiety* would also mean *piety.* The lawyer finally gave it up and walked away wiser for having confronted Socrates.

When Polonius asked Hamlet "What do you read, my Lord?," Hamlet answered, *Words, words, words!* Is it not often true with us all? Whether it is the Bible or something else, we are often beset by words. What do they mean? Are we all getting the same message even when we read the same words?

Words *mean* nothing in themselves, for they are but symbols of ideas. They can be thought of as checks, which in themselves are but bits of paper. They are symbols of money in the bank. If we think of words as checks to be cashed in communicating with others, it will help us to make them meaningful. If we wish to communicate effectively, we cannot be like Humpty Dumpty. When Alice disagreed with the meaning he gave to *glory,* he said, "When I use a word it means just what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less."

There is a lot of Humpty Dumptyism in our church circles, for words are made to mean what we want them to mean. Such as the term *sound,* which is applied to doctrine, preachers, churches, and even journals. The journal you have in hand would be labeled *unsound* by not a few among us, some of whom would see themselves as the only *sound* ones. The term is made to mean something like "right in the things we consider especially important in our interpretation of Scripture." But in the Bible itself the word means *healthy* or *sound in health,* the word "hygiene" coming from the Greek word. Tit. 2:1, for instance, says: "Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine," and the next verse refers to being "sound in faith." These refer to teaching and faith that bring good spiritual health.

2 Tim. 1:13 refers to holding fast "the form of sound words which thou has heard of me," and in I Tim. 1:10 the things that are "contrary to sound doctrine" are lawlessness, murder, disobedience, ungodliness. To take a meaningful term like this and apply it to someone who holds a different opinion about methods is to play Humpty Dumpty.

Church is another Humpty Dumpty word, and we really have a case when *sound* is attached to it. A "sound church" is one that is anti-institutional. Or it is one-cup, or one with no women teachers. But in Scripture it would have to mean something like: *a community of God's people that provides healthy teaching and fellowship for healthy growth. Church* is not a good translation of the Greek word from which it comes, not really a translation at all. Some translations, including Alexander Campbell's, do not even use the term. If we always thought of *ecclesia,* not as church, but as *community,* it would help correct a lot of fallacies. Such ideas as "worship of the church," "church treasury," "work of the church," and "doctrine of the church" would undergo judgment. Even "Church of

Christ" and "Christian Church" might be in trouble. Do we really use these terms to refer to God's community on earth?

Humpty Dumpty even works havoc with *baptism,* which, among us at least, is made to mean immersion, which is a very risky definition. To say that baptism in New Testament times was *by* immersion is one thing, but to say that baptism *means* immersion is another. It is highly unlikely that when Paul refers to "one baptism" in Eph. 4:5 that he means one immersion. Really, "one Lord, one faith, one immersion" makes little sense. Would anybody ever suppose there could be two or more immersions? Almost certainly the apostle is saying that there is but one *initiation* or *means of induction* for all people, Jews and Gentiles alike, which is the point he is making.

A word seldom means what it means etymologically (and baptism does mean immersion in this sense), but it means what usage dictates. *Candidate* means one who comes out dressed in white etymologically and *dean* means a leader of ten men, just to give two examples. It is not likely that Jesus told his disciples to "immerse" all nations (Mt. 28:19), but rather to *initiate* them into God's new community. The initiatory rite happened to be immersion. I say "happened to be" because it is apparent that Jesus did not invent the rite, or even choose it. It was the means of initiation already in use when he arrived on the scene. So, I would say baptism *means* initiation and that it was *by* immersion.

When "remission of sins" is connected to baptism as it is in Acts 2:38, we must be careful to recognize that a term can be used in different senses in different contexts. Surely "remission of sins" does not relate to baptism the same way it does to the blood of Christ, as in Mt. 26:28: "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Even the force of the term in Acts 10:43 seems different: "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."

Is not remission of sins *actually* realized through faith in the blood of Christ rather than by *any* external act? This means that "remission of sins" in Acts 2:38 is in some sense different from the other two references. I agree with Alexander Campbell when he said in his debate with McCalla: "One is *actually* saved when he believes; he is *formally* saved when he is baptized." So baptism as the formal initiation into God's community is for the remission of sins.

The Bible itself makes an effort to distinguish between form and substance in reference to baptism. I Pet. 3:21 cautions that baptism does *not* in itself cleanse, but it is "the answer of a good conscience toward God." The same passage says baptism saves, but again this cannot mean *saved* in the same sense that faith in the blood of Christ saves. Bap-

tism *typically* or *formally* saves, or as Peter puts it, it is "the like figure" or it is the "answer" of a good conscience, which shows that a believing, obeying conscience in what Christ has done is what *really* saves.

Paul also draws the distinction in Tit. 3:5. After stating that we are not saved by *any* work of righteousness which we do ourselves, he shows that it is only by God's mercy, "by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." It is clear that the apostle does not see baptism as regeneration, but as the *washing* of regeneration, which must be like saying that the water symbolizes the cleansing wrought by the Spirit of God within the soul. And yet this formal act is a part of God's plan for us, clearly a command.

These illustrations are sufficient to show that while words are God's means of communicating His will to us, we must avoid the fallacy of Humpty Dumptyism by making those words mean what we want them to mean. We are often "too quick on the draw" in interpreting Scripture. We mouth an array of verses, many of them by memory, without ever giving any critical study as to what they really mean. We presume, perhaps *arrogantly* presume, that we and we alone teach them correctly. We sometimes err through overemphasis, making passages mean *more* than was intended, while neglecting others, making them mean *less* than was intended.

Your mind matters! It matters so much that it gives place to the great truth that *God has spoken.* Unless our minds are free and courageous, reasonable and disciplined, honest and good, it makes little difference as to whether God has spoken. We must take care that we do not put words in His mouth! --- *the Editor*

Peace is such a precious jewel that I would give anything for it but truth. --- *Matthew Henry*

When we do not find peace within ourselves, it is vain to look for it elsewhere. --- *Duc francois de la Rochefoucauld*

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THE REAL ISSUE

A Church of Christ (non-instrument) minister in Nashville is presently writing a series of articles in Texas' *Firm Foundation* on "Instrumental Music: The Real Issue Involved." It is refreshing to see Tennessee and Texas get together like this, for it has not always been the case. In fact the *Firm Foundation* was born out of concern for Tennessee heresy. The issue

that time, back in 1884, was rebaptism. “Uncle Dave” Lipscomb, editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, believed, like Alexander Campbell before him, that faith in Christ is sufficient grounds for being baptized, and that one does not have to *understand* that it is for the remission of sins. So, the Nashville editor opposed the rebaptism of Baptists, believing that they should be accepted as brethren in Christ.

Austin McGary, a rough and tumble sheriff-preacher on the Texas frontier, strongly disagreed. He not only bushwhacked his way across Texas, rebaptizing all those he could who had not consciously been baptized for the remission of sins, but he established the *Firm Foundation* to promote the idea and to oppose Editor Lipscomb in Nashville. Churches divided and court suits followed. I have recently read some of these trials in Texas courts, one of them going to the highest court in the state. In some cases one side is referred to as “the *Firm Foundation* faction.”

For decades the Tennessee-Texas relationship among Churches of Christ was tense to say the least, and even today the fences have not all been mended, leaving a few mavericks to run at large. It is a long way from Nashville to Abilene. You might try driving it sometime! Even if you try flying it there is no way to make it in one hop. You have to change planes in Dallas!

So there are some of us who note with glad hearts when a Nashville writer appears in the Austin journal, even if it takes a series against instrumental music to do it. It is often the case that folk are united more by what they are *against* than by what they are *for,* if indeed that is unity.

There is yet another journal among us that has a series going on instrumental music, *Truth Magazine* out of Dayton, Ohio, though it is a Texan that authors the lead article, “Instrumental Music and the Silence of the Scriptures.”

The articles in the two papers have a similar view as to the real issue: *it is a matter or respecting Biblical authority.* This means that we non-instrumentalists respect the authority of Scripture while the instrumentalists do not. The Texas paper puts it this way: “The real issue involved in this controversy is *the authority of the Bible,* and the authority of the Bible is at the very heart of man’s relationship with God. It is not so much the presence or absence of an organ in a church building as it is the attitude toward divine authority which such presence or absence reflects.”

In other words, if there is an organ in the church that shows that the people do not have the right attitude toward the Bible. The Ohio journal says this: “The absence of mechanical devices of music in our meeting houses serves as a witness to our adherence to a respected principle of Bible interpretation, the *prohibition of divine silence.* “ The article closes with

this daring judgment: “The Christian who consistently exalts the will of God above man’s, through an application of this principle, will never worship God in music, except by singing.”

This language is strong and unmistakable. One says our instrumental brethren do not respect the authority of the Bible, and since this is basic to our relationship to God their integrity as Christians is challenged. The other says that if people “exalt the will of God above man’s” they will sing only acappella, which is to say, of course, that if they use an instrument they are putting man’s will before God’s.

It is hard to believe that these two writers could read a journal like the *Christian Standard*, for example, and charge that those who write for it do not honor the authority of Scripture. I would hazard the guess that if an *impartial* judge were to study “their” papers over against “our” papers he would find as much, if not more, allegiance to Scripture in theirs as in ours. Their preachers and their churches respect the authority of the Bible as much as any of us. I circulate at large among both groups and I see no appreciable difference. Perhaps we *all* need to grow closer to Scripture.

The music question is not a matter of some of us honoring the authority of Scripture and others not, but a matter of interpreting the Scriptures differently --- or a matter of interpreting the *silence* of Scripture differently, if you like. The brother who referred to the “prohibition of divine silence” as a respected principle of interpretation would favor me with the name of any hermeneutical authority that cites such a principle. This would have to mean that God prohibits anything that the Bible is silent about. If this is true, we are all under condemnation.

What this amounts to is that each of our sects is very selective about how it interprets Biblical silence. If we wish to erect a multi-million dollar edifice, which includes all the modernity of the most fashionable denomination, we do not let Biblical silence get in our way. But when others practice what we don’t want, such as instrumental music, we ungraciously accuse them of not respecting Scripture, the *silence* of Scripture, mind you.

The two journals that I have quoted represent different kinds of non-instrument Churches of Christ. The *Firm Foundation* stands with those churches that support Herald of Truth and all such cooperative enterprises, while *Truth Magazine* opposes Herald of Truth, etc. These churches are no longer in fellowship with each other. The Ohio paper charges that the real issue is not a cooperative radio-TV program, but an attitude toward the authority of Scripture, that the Texas paper has surrendered its allegiance to “the silence of Scripture.” After all, where does the Bible say anything about having such an arrangement as Herald of Truth? So, those who support it no longer respect Biblical authority.

The Texas paper on the other hand considers those who oppose what they have, despite the silence of Scripture, as fanatics and hobbyists, perhaps even as troublemakers and factionists. Yet all they are doing is making the same argument that the Texas paper makes against those who have the instrument.

At my side is still another journal. *Gospel Tidings* out of Fort Worth, Texas and emanating from the non-Sunday School Churches of Christ. Edited by an irenic soul, Larry Branum, it is more concerned for peace and unity than the old controversial issues, which reflects the change taking place among these people. But still they believe the Sunday School to be wrong (which is their right, of course) and they have always argued, like the editors described above, that to promote the Sunday School is to impose upon the silence of Scripture and to challenge the authority of the Bible.

There is still another journal that comes my way that represents still another kind of Church of Christ. It is anti-instrument and anti-Sunday School, but also contends that the Supper should be served in only one container, and so they are called “one cup” churches. While they too are becoming more unity conscience, they believe that those who use more than one cup (does the Bible not say that Jesus took *the* cup?) do not show proper respect for the authority of the scriptures.

They all say the same thing, and the list could be extended to include the Church of Christ that believes a precise order must be followed in the assembly, as per Acts 2:42, and that segment that insists that only wine should grace the Lord’s table. And on and on. They all say that the real issue is not classes, cups, instruments, grape juice, or what have you, but *an attitude toward the authority of Scriptures.* Those who have what I object to do not respect the authority of the Bible like I do, and those who object to what I have are antis and fanatics. What *I* object to is a matter of faith; what *they* object to is a matter of opinion. That is the party line of all our sects.

The answer to all this sectarian garbage is simple enough: “Accept one another, just as Christ accepted us to the glory of God” (Rom. 15:7). And the first verse of that chapter says that we are to accept each other “but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.”

That is my own posit on exactly. I accept *all* these brother editors that I have referred to, realizing that we will never agree on such matters. But we don’t have to. But we do have to accept one another, in spite of the differences. Romans 14 would never have been written if Christians *had* to see everything alike. The apostle plainly says in verse 5: “Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind.” How beautifully liberating that is. I don’t have to judge my brother over these matters that seem petty to me. I am only to love and accept him. God will judge him as to the place he gives to his scruples, and especially for

the way he treats his brethren who differ with him. “To his own master he stands or falls” (verse 4). Again, how liberating! I do not have to judge my brothers who differ with me. I am to love them, for it is the debt I can never pay (Rom. 13:8).

But we *are* judging when we say that we are the only ones that respect the authority of the Bible. Unless they see it our way and practice it the way we do we charge that they are placing man’s will above God’s. That is being sectarian.

All these editors believe the basics of Scripture, such as the seven ones of Eph. 4, which the apostle lays down as the foundation for unity. They differ only upon what the Bible says nothing about, its silence, or in areas where differences can be expected. It is upon these that we can be united, if we are not already. We may be like the quarreling married couple that resolved to stop such foolishness when they realized that God had lovingly made them one. We *are* one in Christ. We only need to cut out our sinful judging of each other over our opinions and deductions.

This means that we can have Churches of Christ that are instrumental and those that are not, those that have Sunday Schools and those that do not, those that support Herald of Truth and those that do not, *and so on,* and still be a united part of the great Church of God in heaven and on earth.

Can it really be any other way? Has it ever been any other way, even among those congregations in the New Testament? They all respected the authority of the Scriptures, but still they differed. --- *the Editor*

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Travel Letter . . .

THE “DIRTY DOZEN” IN ANTI COUNTRY

The term *anti* actually has little meaning since we are all anti in some things. Moreover I dislike pejoratives. They are often the creation of small minds and vindictive spirits. But in our generation among Churches of Christ the term *anti* is generally understood to refer to the several hundreds of congregations that oppose Herald of Truth and all such extra-congregational institutions and cooperatives. I’ve even heard them apply the term to themselves. So they as well as the general reader will understand that we intend no offense. As for the *doctrinal* posture of these brethren, including their *anti* concerns, this journal is sympathetic. It is in making a sect out of opinions that we take issue.

Anyway, during April I was in what is called “anti country,” the area in and around Tampa, Florida. It is so called because the majority of the Churches of Christ in the area are of this persuasion, and also because it is the home of Florida (Christian) College. I insert the parenthesis because originally the institution bore the full name, only to drop *Christian* some years age, which must be both a *first* and an *only* in our history. Many of our colleges have changed their names, and it is common these days to transform them into universities (presto! just like that), but the one in Tampa is the only one I know of to denominate itself *Christian*, and then years later by board action drop the name.

I may have had a small, indirect role in that little drama, but that is another story. It is enough to say that the name was dropped so as to bring the name of the school into closer conformity to the board’s position on the relationship that should exist between such institutions and the church, or something like that. They would probably say that there is no more reason to call an educational institution *Christian* when it is conducted by believers on Christian principals than to call an insurance agency or a grocery store *Christian* when it is conducted that way. The oddity is that they first took that name and then went to the trouble to drop it. We cite this strictly as a matter of interest. No criticism. I would come nearer criticizing the rather artificial transformation of colleges, that do well in being *colleges*, into universities.

This reminds me of the response made by old W. E. Garrison, the late dean of Disciple historians, when asked what he thought a Christian college should be. First of all, he said, it should be a *college!*

As for the other derogatory term in the title, *dirty dozen*, I make no apology, except that those I refer to are more than a dozen, for when folk get ridiculed, browbeaten, and excommunicated they can hardly be anything but *dirty*, to the Churches of Christ at least. They are now a new church, a *free, open* Church of Christ, though still strongly conservative. *Free* in that they assume the liberty to think and act for themselves, apart from party presuppositions; *open* in that they have a broader view of fellowship, no longer seeing themselves as the only true church. Both free and open in that Jesus is now the frame of reference instead of the traditions of a sect.

They are all under 30 except one retired couple and they are mostly from the anti churches, if not altogether, and several of them were students at Florida College. Since they knew me only as editor of this journal, I arrived at Tampa airport as a stranger to them, and they readily conceded that they did not know what they were getting themselves into, having so controversial a figure in their midst. In their college years I was a no-no, and here they were inviting me into both their home and assembly. That illustrates what I mean by *open* and *free*. But three days later I bade them farewell at that same airport with our friendship

secure. We found each other in Jesus more than in doctrinal unanimity. As the escalator bore me down the ramp toward my plane and out of sight of their smiling faces, I realized that something uniquely significant is happening among our people all over the country. They are walking out on sectarianism without being sectarians themselves. The cry is, *Let my people go!*, but not to start another sect, but to be a free and open Church of Christ, such as was envisioned by our pioneers, where there is unity in essentials and liberty in opinions, the essentials being the seven unities of Eph. 4.

Our part in this story begins when we received a request for our bargain offer of 18 back issues of this paper for 3.00 from one Tiffany Crawley in Clearwater, Florida, who reported that she had just read her first copy and wanted to read more. A random selection included the February 1974 number, the lead article being “The Nature of the Assembly.” This is what got all of us into trouble. The “dirty dozen” were still a part of the Northeast Church of Christ, and when it came time for John Foster to give his lesson to the congregation on a Sunday evening, he chose to read this article I had written five years before.

“It was so clear,” he told me, “and expressed what I had been thinking.” He was confident they would accept it with the enthusiasm he had. But the essay would be disquieting to anyone with such an institutional view of the church as to suppose that “worship” begins and ends within certain prescribed hours at a building and confined to “five acts of worship.” The article notes that all of life is worship for the believer. I even dared to suggest that a woman is worshiping or serving God in the kitchen as much as in “the sanctuary,” and that a Christian is worshiping when playing with the kids at the park. But the most offensive suggestion was that one may be worshiping when she takes her dog walking.

John condensed and reproduced the article, and eventually gave it rather wide circulation in anti country. He met immediate opposition the evening he read it, some rising from their seats and branding it heresy. It did not help all that much when he revealed its author. What impressed him most was the intensity of their opposition. For at least eight months *(months* not weeks) they continued to discuss the article in their gatherings. During all this exercise, which appeared to the freer thinkers as an obsession - “The man doth protest too much!,” John suggested that they just forget the whole thing, that the article did not mean that much to him. But now that he had introduced it they were of no mind to forget it.

Once I re-read the article it seemed harmless enough and I was persuaded it was another case of *the issue is not the issue.* If their minister had read it, it would have passed muster, though they may have supposed he was reading stuff other than what comes out of Florida College or the *Gospel Guardian.* They were already after John for being different, and

they had told him precisely that. *You are different from us!* A converted hippie, he had not cut his hair as short as theirs, he *refused* to wear a tie, and he was always talking about love, grace and Jesus. At Florida College they called him "Holy John"! Besides, and this was the rub, he thought for himself and did not buy the party line. This was the case with all the "dirty dozen," so they were destined to go down (or *up)* together.

The most amusing part of the story to me (and partyism can be as amusing as it is tragic) was the way they treated my article in the private sessions. When John Foster, Clyde Crawley, and Bill Evans, the dirtiest of "the dirty dozen," stated what the article meant to them, it was accepted as sufficiently sound. *But that isn't what the article actually says!*, the leaders insisted, and they proceeded to discipline them on grounds of teaching false doctrine as *they* interpreted the article.

The minister at another nearby anti church, the Hercules Church of Christ, read the controversial missile, which had by now become a mail-out, and found it bearable. Since they were good church members, even if they wouldn't wear ties, he invited the dissidents to his place, which made for peace for a time. But eventually, due presumably to the influence of the article, their home church withdrew from them. Charge: teaching false doctrine.

But why such a big deal over one little article?, they asked me. First of all, the party *has* to be right. No one dare question it. Too, the article challenged a basic premise of the anti position, which is that dollars become "the Lord's money" when they go into "the church treasury." If there is no scriptural precedent for a "treasury" to start with, it actually being our own arrangement, then why all the controversy over how *that* money is spent? If the notion of "five acts of worship" is only our tradition and not scriptural (and the article noted that not one of the five items is ever called worship in the New Testament), then the manner of *giving*, one of the five items, is left to our own discretion (there might be no treasury at all), then the bottom falls out of all the arguments relative to "the Lord's money," which *ipse dixit* becomes that when put into "the church treasury."

It is understandable that the new church has no treasury. There is no "offering" on Lord's day. Having no professional minister to pay and no edifice to maintain, assembling money is mostly for the needy. themselves as the need arises.

The dozen or so in Clearwater, as elsewhere, became dirty for loving Jesus more than any party and in being loyal only to him. All across the country I find our youth, who are often affluent as well as intelligent and spiritual, in trouble with their churches mainly because they are tuned in to Jesus and the grace of God, which do not mix all that well with Church of Christism. And churches are running off their most spiritual people, those who are most like Jesus.

This is encouraging, however, for it shows that something important is happening. Our people are on their way out of our crippling, debilitating, exclusivistic sectarianism. All the negative reaction is an indication that the change is substantial. After all, no one beats a dead horse! --- *The Editor*

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Pilgrimage of Joy. . . No. 46

"HOW DID JESUS GET IN HERE?"

W. Carl Ketcherside

The year of 1970 dawned with the war in Vietnam still draped like an albatross around the neck of the nation. The potential for violent protest hovered like a malign storm cloud over the land. No one knew where it would touch the land next with its bombing and murder. The decennial census revealed some strange things. We had passed the two hundred million mark for the first time. The figure was 203,235,298. One-tenth of our citizenry was now over 65. Three-fourths of them were urban dwellers. One eighth were nonwhite. California had overtaken New York as the most populous state. The tide of immigration had shifted from eastern to western flow.

On February 25, a branch of the Bank of America, went up in flames as the result of an antiwar protest at the University of California in Santa Barbara, It seemed that the licking tongues of flame were reaching out to consume our way of life. President Nixon announced his intention of withdrawing an additional 150,000 troops from the stinking cesspool of Vietnam the next year. Then on April 29 the war was escalated when the U.S. and Vietnamese forces began a major invasion of Cambodia.

This triggered massive protests across the land. At Kent State University in Ohio, national guardsmen opened fire upon students protesting the war. Four were killed. Many more were injured. It never was successfully proved that any of those killed were in active protest. The incident triggered rebellion throughout the land. Frustrated young people reacted, often in blind rage. By my birthday, on May 10, a student strike center at Brandeis University, announced that 450 institutions of higher learning had been closed down or were experiencing student antiwar strikes.

One of the places where unrest was surfacing was Illinois State University at Bloomington. At the very height of the ferment, the Christian forces on campus decided to inject the philosophy of the Prince of Peace into an ugly situation. InterVarsity, Christian Collegians, Campus Crusade, the Navigators, and Baptist Student Union, temporarily

transcended their various methods of procedure, and invited me to come for a happening which was simply called “The Way.” It was a happy designation. It was publicized by posters on the campus and in the daily newspaper.

The leaders were sharp enough to realize that unless there was a direct confrontation between the forces of belief and unbelief, between the followers of Jesus and those of the pagans, the meeting would avail nothing. There had to be the actual clash of verbal swords in face-to-face combat. They arranged for that, although, as it turned out, there were unexpected elements which could not be foreseen or provided in advance. These only served to heighten the tension and suspense.

I arrived on the scene the afternoon previous, just in time to see four hundred students wearing black armbands, in honor of their fallen comrades at Kent State, marching to the cemetery in a “Death Walk.” Not a word was spoken as they walked along. Blacks, whites, Orientals, they trudged along the sidewalk, with only the shuffle of their feet marking their progress. In the cemetery they sat in silence with bowed heads, among the stones and granite markers, and then marched back. That night they slept on the ground in the quadrangle in what was advertised as a “sleep out for peace.”

At 9:00 a.m., the following morning, I spoke to the combined forces of Christian students in Adlai Stevenson Memorial Hall on “How Did Jesus Get in Here?” I pointed out that he entered the earth, cradled in the womb of a woman, and He entered Jerusalem on the back of a donkey, to be acclaimed king. But he entered Indiana State in our hearts. He would be as effective as we allowed him to be. He would be as bold, as brave, and as courageous as we were. And I pointed out that although the apostles were unskilled and unlearned, their opponents, “took note of them that they had been with Jesus!’ After answering questions for two hours from a hall that was filled to capacity, I went to the cafeteria in the Girls Dorm, where we continued to talk about the things of the Spirit with some thirty Christian young women.

At 1:00 p.m. I was scheduled to meet in open dialogue three professors who were agnostics. It was to be a clear-cut encounter with raw doubt and blatant unbelief. The lounge was filled with every kind of student. Included were several black activists. There was a Buddhist present. These hardly knew what to do or how to react toward me when I extended my hand and welcomed them. They were afraid of losing ground if they exhibited any kind of fraternity with “whitey.” I had nothing to lose and everything to gain. My theme was “The Transforming Dynamic.” I affirmed the intrusion of God into our universe on a revelational and personal plane. I knew where that revelation was found and I knew the person. I pointed out that Jesus was the only revolutionary in history who changed the world without burning it down.

Dr. Joel Vernon was the first reactor. He had been the son of a Baptist minister but had sold out on his faith. In a speech larded with profanity and four letter words, and obscenities, he branded the new covenant scriptures as a compilation of “myths and damned fairy tales” written to frighten the gullible out of their wits. He was in the Department of Political Science.

He was followed by Dr. Joseph Grabill, of the Department of History. He charged Christianity with creating a coverup to evade reality by the use of traditional words. The last was the eminent Dr. Martin McGuire of the Department of Anthropology. He asserted there was only one brotherhood of the flesh created over millions of years of developmental progress in kinship with animal life.

There was a deep silence as I rose for my ten minute summation and reply. To lessen the feeling I called the men by their first names. I was older by far than either. But all seemed to sense that it was now or never, the battle lines had been drawn. The time for a showdown had arrived. I pointed out that profanity was not proof and expletive was not explanation. It is generally employed by those who face something with which they cannot cope on rational grounds. I said that Joel had started rebelling as a child according to his own testimony, and he was still at it in the same way. I urged him to grow up and face the issue, and not try to smother his inability to do so under the cover of swearing. Surely in his studies of political science he should have developed an adequate vocabulary. I pointed out that while he had made a blanket statement that the word of God consisted of “damned fairy tales” he had not given us a single one of them.

Joseph Grabill needed to realize that words which had been tested and tried were not merely traditional terms but were as modern as the morning newspaper. I mentioned that in his speech he assumed to speak only in traditional words for there were no others by which he could convey his meaning. Tradition means “handed over, or handed down,” and anything from the past had to be described in such terms. There was no better word to describe our problem than sin, and no better one to portray our condition than lost. It was the “lostness of man” which resulted in his loneliness, alienation and depression, Man had cut himself loose from his roots. He was forming a cut flower civilization. It looked good but it was not alive.

I expressed my appreciation for the scholarship of Martin McGuire who had gone to almost incredible lengths to achieve his doctorate in anthropology. But I pointed out that the “brotherhood of the flesh” of which he spoke originated in the jungle and was fast taking us “back home.” It was based upon the “law of fang and claw.” It worshiped the idea of “the survival of the fittest.” It glorified the concept that “to the victor belongs the spoils.” The only real brotherhood worth having was that which originated from a

relationship to the same Father, the Creator of us all. In it we could constitute a family of peace and tranquillity.

While I was answering the professors, a young black Muslim arose and stepped forward, taking his position directly in front of me. He demanded to be heard in the name of Allah. It was evident to see that he craved attention. He grasped at the chance of using our meeting to secure it. I smiling said, “Although I do not see your name on the program, you go ahead and I’ll listen, since it is obvious that if I go ahead, you will not, and I want you to hear what I am saying.” He let loose a tirade against Jesus as a white man’s God, used by western culture to enslave his ancestors. He accused white slavers of being rapists and filled with brutality.

When he ceased speaking, I replied softly. I kept my eye firmly fixed upon him during the entire incident, never allowing it to waver from him a minute. He became uncomfortable at my gaze and his own eyes shifted from side to side. I told him that he was speaking of a different Jesus than the one I was defending. My Jesus was color blind. I pointed out that he was always interested in the poor and depressed. He would not exploit anyone. He branded people like the traders in human lives as hypocrites. No one ever raped another by following Jesus but by departing from his teaching. Jesus was an advocate of the philosophy of “the second mile” lifestyle. Indeed, it was Jesus dwelling in me that made it possible for me to love him. Muttering that he did not want my love, he turned and left the room.

After this interruption I finished my answer to the reactors and closed with prayer for them. It appeared that I had been in control of the situation throughout, although there was a time or two when it approached the explosive point. But love had won the day. Later that evening I addressed a student rally which was held in Wesley Foundation headquarters. I spoke on the theme “How to Really Get in the Way.” I answered questions for another hour, and we explored the Christian attitude toward sex, war, social reform, and other pertinent themes. It was my suggestion that the Christians take over the quadrangle for a full day, and make it an arena in which they took on all comers. They could challenge the neo-paganism openly and it was better to fall in battle than to be nibbled to death by mice.

When I finished at ten o’clock it represented a full day of direct encounter and dialogue. For thirteen hours I had been on the firing line testing the sword of the Spirit against the best the enemy had to offer. I was tired but keyed up for anything. I flew back to Saint Louis that night, and virtually the whole distance I prayed for those I had met. It had been a fruitful day.

I would not have you think that all of 1970 was like the encounter I have just described. There were moments of tranquil meditation and joy. There were times when I could draw a little way apart from the multitude and refresh myself by study and meditation. I availed myself of every such moment. But generally there was activity of some kind and I traveled from one end of the country to another preaching the gospel of peace without compromise and emphasizing the hope which makes that gospel "good news." In fact, one of the great things that happened during the year occurred in February. It was notable because of things which transpired which were not on the program. But I will have to tell you about it in the next installment.

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SHOULD NOT THE OLD TEACH THE YOUNG?

Wisdom has always ruled that the young should be taught by the old. Plato's *Republic* prepares the guardians of the state until they are well passed the middle years. The ancient Jews viewed children as the most important part of their community and their education their most sacred task. Since the knowledge they taught was deposited mostly in memory rather than books, the aged, who had stored up knowledge like a cistern, were the trusted teachers.

The Jewish synagogue was not a "house of worship" but a house of instruction, and it was the seasoned teacher who taught "the wisdom of the ancients." Even the Christ was schooled in the synagogue, sitting at the feet of his elders, and the God of heaven waited until he was "over 30" or something like that, and had grown in wisdom and stature, before He sent him out as a teacher (Lk. 2:52).

It was in the synagogue that the budding teacher did his "practice teaching" under the guidance of his elders. The synagogues were small and numerous, with as many as 480 in Jerusalem alone. Since there were seven readers for every Sabbath lesson the youth had opportunity to develop. We can see the growing Jesus and then Jesus as a man in his 20's reading again and again in his home congregation in Nazareth, sometimes no doubt with attending remarks, not only on the Sabbath but on Tuesdays and Thursdays as well. There was nothing unusual, therefore, in his appearance before his home synagogue once he began his ministry, which ended in an uproar (Lk. 4:16-30). The uproar was caused over the interpretation that he gave the messianic text in Isaiah, applying it to himself. He probably had not confronted his elders like that before, but he was *now* a teacher, called of God, an itinerant rabbi interpreting the law, which he did not do as a young reader.

The early church followed the way of the synagogue, their assemblies being teaching situations. It was centuries before the church had edifices known as houses of worship. For the first several decades their only Bible was the Old Testament. In it they read: “Hear, a sons, a father’s instruction, and be attentive, that you may gain insight” (Pro. 4:1). The verses that follow show how the author of the proverbs had been taught by his father in his youth. The center for this teaching was the home as well as the synagogue. Referring to the statutes that God had given, they read in Deut. 6:7: “Teach them diligently to your children, and talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.”

One Jewish king, a son of wise Solomon, lives in infamy because “he forsook the counsel which the old men gave him, and took counsel with the young men who had grown up with him” (l Kgs. 12:8). Our youth today do not need the wisdom of those they have grown up with as much as the wisdom of those seasoned by long years of study, such as referred to in Titus 2:3-4: “Bid the older women likewise to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children.” And God, the great shepherd of us all, has given His church under-shepherds in the form of elders who are “apt to teach” to watch after the sheep. It is apparent that lambs are not to be watched after by other lambs!

I realize that in our youth-oriented culture, the age of the face lift, it is hardly appropriate to speak in behalf of age and experience. Few there are these days who would agree with the poet Goldsmith when he said: “I love everything that’s old: old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wines,” or with Joseph Campbell when he penned: “As a white candle in a holy place, so is the beauty of an aged face.”

Yet there must be many who agree with me, especially among the young. I noted with interest that 19,000 young people crowded into Madison Square Garden to hear the pope, and a perennial complaint of those who go to the big universities is that they are too often taught by grad students and junior profs rather than by the older, seasoned profs, who are often immersed in research. I wrote a reference letter recently for a university student who is eager to get into a special program for an elect few, to be taught by a renowned visiting professor whose hair has long since blossomed into gray. I visited years ago with W. E. Garrison at the University of Houston who was still teaching in his 90’s after retiring from Chicago, and he had plenty of students in his classes.

My rather extensive acquaintance with high schools through the years indicates that the teachers in most demand are often those who have been at their posts for decades. Those right out of college often have to prove themselves to the students. It is also true that there

is hardly “a generation gap” when it comes to scout leaders, camp directors, coaches, and those who ride herd on hiking and skiing jaunts.

The older leading and teaching the younger is a tradition sanctified by history and Scripture alike, and yet trends among our churches appear to ignore this when it comes to teaching our youth. The so-called “youth minister” is very much with us, and much of the spiritual education of our young people is turned over to someone who is often but a kid himself. The church presumes that the youth will no longer listen to the old, who are now those “over 30” and up, so a youth is imported to do what the home and church have done all these centuries.

It should strike us as amiss that any Body of believers would have to import someone to teach and entertain their youth, and it is often the case that there is more entertaining than teaching, with no little coddling involved in some cases. A case could be made for the claim that only affluent churches and spoiled kids gave place to the youth minister. In my meanderings among the churches I hear it said of the youth, *They want a minister of their own!* But I am persuaded that it is not spoiled kids as much as it is spoiled parents. What gave birth to the youth minister is the simple fact that the older ones do not *really* want to be the Body of Christ, which is to function by “the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love” (Eph. 4:16).

It says *each part* is to “work properly,” and this makes for Body growth. By committed service the church “build itself up in love,” by being joined and knit together. In every church there are those who can take the kids on hay rides and to the Pizza parlors and teach them about Jesus all the way. If it is true that “they don’t want any of us doing it,” which I also hear, then they *are* spoiled, but I am persuaded that our youth will respond to older leadership within the church that points them to Jesus and to serious Bible study. Such a ministry should have outreach, with the kids touching lives that hurt (such as visits to hospitals, shut-ins, nursing homes) rather than always being self-serving.

If we will really believe in our young people, assuming that they want to be spiritual and Biblically literate, and prepare that kind of table before them, they will respond. If they experiment with dope, goof off with the most worldly in school, and get involved in heavy petting and sex, it may be because parents and church have too superficial a religion. I am not talking about being strict necessarily, but in making religion vital. The church and parents alike are to be more concerned with what our kids *need* rather than with what they want. And a church must learn to meet its needs through mutual ministry and commitment rather than by importation. The best way to have a church of spectators is to hire out all the ministries. Has God called us to sit in church and put money into a basket?

The youth minister is not likely to go away, but that is not my point anyway. He has as much a place in the system we have created as any other kind of minister. I believe, in the light of Scripture, that every believer is to be a minster, and that we should *mutually* build up the Body, with the shepherd-elders exercising the oversight. If we import ministers (we should really be *exporting* them into all the world!) it should be for community evangelism and outreach. I would assign the youth minister to service among children and the very aged in the community. Think of the children that no church ever reaches, who can be seen playing in their yards as you drive to church. And the very old in all sorts of places are the forgotten ones who need to be with youth, not so much to be taught as to be loved. They are the ones we should coddle for Jesus' sake.

While there is a sense in which everybody is to teach everyone else, the young the old as well as the old the young, the divine order is to be respected. The elders are to teach the church, the young women are to be taught by the older women, etc. When a church, or any substantial part of it, is generally taught by youth, it appears to this editor at least to be a satire upon all that the wisdom of the ages says to us. I think of this when I see a youth barely out of college in the pulpit of our churches, assigned the role of *minister* and principal teacher of hundreds, while grey-haired elders and seasoned teachers twice or thrice his age are made spectators. --- *the Editor*

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